

ONE LAST TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

The following column was the last work Arthur Montford had scheduled for 2014. We felt it was only right - and with permission from his family - that we include it as the final thought in our last issue of the year.

Bryce Ritchie, Editor



Remembering a hero from Ralston

Arthur Montford profiles Eddie Hamilton, a small champion with a big heart

In the spring of 1930, each golf club in Glasgow sent a member to a meeting to discuss the formation of the Glasgow Golf Union. The meeting, according to the minutes, was "most cordial" and the unanimous choice to be the union's first president was Eddie Hamilton of Ralston.

Eddie, who stood at just 5'6", was a well-known figure in West of Scotland golf circles and was club champion at Ralston in 1931 and 1932. But his most prolific years came at the end of the 1930s, with a remarkable sequence of results which established him as one of Scotland's finest players.

In 1934, he was a semi-finalist in the Scottish Amateur Championship. Two years later, he won the 'Scottish' by defeating Robert Neill by one hole in a splendid final played at Carnoustie.

In 1937, he was again in the semi-finals, and a year after that, he scored his second Scottish Amateur victory by defeating Robert Rutherford 4&2 at Muirfield in East Lothian. His fine sequence of events ended with yet another semi-final trip in 1939. Three semi-final appearances and two victories in the space of five years represented great consistency from a player who practised diligently at the Western Club in winter.

Eddie was still winning in 1956 when he won the Glasgow Golf Union Strokeplay Championship amidst the distinguished company of Willie Jack, Robin Cater and Lindsay Renfrew.

The union's Matchplay Championship had distinguished fields each year,



Eddie Hamilton, left, chats to Bobby Locke in 1958 at Royal Lytham & St Annes

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which made Ian Carslaw's four wins in a row from 1977 very impressive indeed.

Glasgow club members also showed promising results, with John Rome winning two in a row, 1963 and 1964, and Cliff Barrowman doing the double in 1990 and 1991, followed by Chris Kelly of Cawder - now a respected PGA professional - in 1994 and 1995.

Eddie was always intensely proud of his membership at Ralston and, while the club was still playing over the nine-hole course at Bellahouston, a Championship Shield was

purchased by subscription for five pounds. The Shield, won for the first time in 1903 by ABS Watson, is still in use today. Eddie, as mentioned earlier, was champion in 1931 and '32. He was also captain of the club in 1954.

Eddie was a keen supporter of the Ralston ladies' section and helped with the documentation of the centenary booklet of 2004, which revealed that the club's lady members were up and running when the club moved out from Bellahouston to Ralston.

The year of 1911 must have

been a busy one for the ladies because, at the club's AGM, the club's oldest rivals, Renfrewshire County, were given permission to play their medals over Ralston. What a fine tribute to the condition of the course.

After World War II, Hamilton moved easily into the world of journalism, writing a 'must read' column in the *Sunday Express*. You will see from the accompanying photograph that he was on first name terms with the stars of the day.

Eddie died in February 1997, just a few weeks short of his 87th birthday.